



Roberto (center), who was recently named an Outstanding Mentor by DOE's Office of Science, led a group of INL interns into Yellowstone National Park on a research trek during the summer of 2009.

DOE deems INL researcher Outstanding Mentor

by [Keith Arterburn](#), *INL Communications & Public Affairs*

Frank Roberto lives to research biology, teach Aikido and mentor students.

Recently, Roberto, an Idaho National Laboratory researcher since 1988, was selected by the Department of Energy's Office of Science for its prestigious Outstanding Mentor Award.

"This is very special recognition for me because it is important for science that we properly prepare new generations to engage in energetic discovery and research," Roberto said.

The Outstanding Mentor award recognizes researchers for personal dedication and quality mentoring efforts in preparing students with "well-defined research projects," supporting productive research output, and guiding individuals to become well-rounded research professionals.

Cynthia White, director for [Workforce Development for Teachers and Scientists at DOE's Office of Science](#), which sponsors this program, praised the selected mentors in the announcement letter.

"Many scientists contribute more than just time in mentoring these participants," she wrote. "They impart their many years of hard-earned experience and inculcate an appreciation of a professional field that demands as much as it returns."

DOE commended Roberto for his "willingness to share knowledge and to inspire and instill confidence in the next generation of scientists and engineers."



Roberto examines a sample during a 2009 research trip to Yellowstone with interns.



Interns receive hands-on training during a 2009 field survey in Yellowstone.

Roberto has mentored nearly 60 students during his 21-year tenure at INL. He earned his doctorate in biochemistry from the [University of California, Riverside](#). And he has been a research leader in many areas, including biotechnology for emergency response and diagnosis of potential bioterrorist threats, molecular research of the bacterial pathogen *Brucella*, and microbiological research of acid-loving bacteria that could be applied to biomining and bioenergy production.

INL's robust high school, college and graduate intern program hosted 337 students in a broad range of areas from 76 institutions in fiscal year 2009. Previous INL mentors who received Outstanding Mentor recognition include Jeff Giglio, Yoshiko Fujita, Anthony Appelhans, Eric Loewen, Henry Chu and Tom Lillo.

"We are proud of Frank Roberto and his decades of personal dedication to students," said Melinda Hamilton, director of INL Education Programs. "Frank is a master at engaging students and raising their research skills well beyond what most of them would believe they could achieve."

Learn more about [INL's intern program](#).

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